CHAPTER - I

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Historically the major contribution in the realm of political ideas has been made by Western political theorists and it is no wonder that their thought has dominated the theory and practice of politics for many centuries. It is our view that this dominance was the result of a systematic effort to develop an autonomous political theory, while this was not the case with Indian political theory.

There were many historical factors in the Indian context that have accounted for the lack of a well-developed political theory. In the first place, the peculiar context of the age emphasised the ethical side of life against a serious study of politics. In other words, politics was regarded as secondary to the moral concerns of life. In the second place, the long colonial period in Indian political history stultified intellectual growth and free thinking on the part of Indians. However, this did not mean that valuable contributions could not be made by Indians to political theory or political ideas. It is in this context the contribution of JP* in the domain of political ideas acquired a major significance.

* We shall hereafter refer to Jayaprakash Narayan as JP.
Some Theoretical Issues

In this chapter we shall first specify the theoretical issues of concern in the thesis and then set out the methods and techniques employed in our investigation. It is presumed that there was a close connection between the theoretical framework and the methodology used in our analysis of JP's political ideas.

In this study we shall be discussing essentially JP's political ideas rather than his political theory. This particular distinction between JP's 'political ideas' and JP's 'political theory' may appear invidious, far-fetched and untenable as an academic proposition. But in our view this was a very important distinction for the simple reason that JP in his long public life as a freedom fighter and a revolutionary, as a thinker and a political activist formulated new concepts based on old ideas rather than propounding a systematic political theory of his own. It is our firm conviction that JP did not develop a well-conceived scientific political theory of his as such, but depending upon the contingent circumstances and his own understanding of such forces he developed his political ideas to suit the Indian situation. In view of this pragmatic and valid consideration and to maintain academic
objectivity we have discussed in this thesis JP's political ideas in terms of his key concepts of Socialism, Sarvodaya, Total Revolution, Communitarian Polity and Partyless Democracy. In order to provide academic depth and substance to the discussion of JP's political ideas in his key concepts which have been indicated, we have also examined the relevant contribution of other Indians like Gandhi and Nehru from whom JP derived inspiration for some of his political ideas. In the early phase when JP came under the pervasive influence of Marxian Socialism, he developed close affinity with Jawaharlal Nehru who was an ardent socialist in his own right. This commonality in thought and interests can be traced to 1930's when JP and Nehru were prominently associated with the establishment of the Congress Socialist Party. In JP's later phase he came under the powerful influence of Gandhi with his emphasis on the moral aspects of every problem. JP's concepts of Sarvodaya, Total Revolution Communitarian Polity and Partyless Democracy clearly demonstrated the impact of Gandhian political ideas on his thought process.

We shall examine JP's important political concepts not only from the perspective of internal consistency and analytical rigour but also from the point of view of their practical utility and application in the Indian context.
In our viewpoint JP as a revolutionary was not interested in political theories or ideas merely to satisfy his intellectual curiosity, but he was concerned with the most serious task of developing political ideas and then putting them into practice to serve the cause of the Indian people. Keeping this aspect in view we shall analyze the relevance and significance of his concepts like Sarvodaya, Communitarian Polity and Total Revolution to India and its people.

The fundamental issues in political theory were the State and Revolution. Historically, political philosophers and thinkers have applied their thought processes to analyze the foundations, activities and purposes of the State with a view to transform or completely destroy a State's structure and to build another in its place through the instrumentality of a revolution. The emphasis in this work will be on the development of JP's framework of political analysis and political action as manifested in his important concepts. This was indeed a very formidable task. The difficulty arose because of the fact that JP did not have a very consistent approach to political philosophy. Hence, our task would be to probe systematically into the metaphysical foundations of his political ideas followed by an analysis of the tactics and strategy that he developed for political
action. In JP the metaphysical efforts were followed by political action since every political action was preceded by the germination of political ideas. Through such a process he related it to his avowed objective of transforming the State and to improve the quality of life of the human beings. Herein we find the relevance of JP’s strategy and tactics which he formulated and experimented within the framework of his political ideas which was basically action-oriented in approach.

We hope to study JP on his own terms in respect of his political ideas which will be deduced from his writings, speeches and actions. It is also our belief that it was possible to develop a theoretical model of JP from his political ideas and political action. We intend to see JP’s ideas within the Indian context. This did not mean an uncritical adulation of JP nor an aversion to other political thinkers and other situations. Our only concern was to study JP as a thinker and a revolutionary since we believe that Indian scholars should devote more time and intellectual energy to study the contribution of our own thinkers and leaders rather than indulging in an obsessive preoccupation with Western political thinkers. In this respect, our study will emphasise the two-fold aspect of JP’s framework and its relationship to the Indian situation.
From a theoretical perspective JP's political ideas were primarily concerned with the twin problems of the individual in relation to the State and the individual in relation to the society. He asked these two questions persistently and consistently in terms of his political ideas or concepts which he formulated to reorder Indian society. He also raised the question as to the nature and substance of the relationship or interaction process between the individual and the State at one level and between the individual and the society at another level. Further, he also asked the question as to which of the two (the individual or the State, the individual or the society) should constitute the unit of analysis for political action. On the issue of who should have primacy in this ongoing two-fold relationship, JP did not appear to take a consistent position. In his early phase JP was under the influence of Western Marxian model and he naturally assigned a supreme position to the State vis-a-vis the individual. However, in his later phase JP was deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophy and he reversed the order by assigning a key position to the individual vis-a-vis the State.

This would take us to the concept of political obligation. Political obligation was the obligation that a citizen owed to the State and vice versa. It may be
pointed out that obligation was not total but it could take different forms - legal, ethical, political, societal, etc. The citizen was faced with the competing pulls of one obligation over the other. It also led to conflictual and contradictory pulls when the obligations were not properly understood in the appropriate context. Given this kind of a situation there was always a severe limitation to individual choice. It was not surprising that in political theory important consideration was given to the concept of political obligation. This concept governed the interaction process between the citizens on the one hand and the State on the other hand. In other words, this concept provided the philosophical justification to the legitimacy of the State. Political obligation of the individual towards the State in such a context was either the result of physical force, authority, power, etc. In respect of JP's political ideas it may be stated that all political action represented one kind of human action among many other types that were possible. After JP gave up his belief in Marxian Socialism he developed his other concepts like *Servodaya*, Communitarian Polity, Total Revolution, etc. on the assumption that the individual as a citizen was obliged to obey the rules and regulations of the State only so long as it fulfilled its obligation towards him.
In our view all the political ideas of JP were formulated with a view to foster a revolution through qualitative human change. The term revolution was generally understood to mean a sudden unexpected change, sometimes violent sometimes non-violent, but necessarily involving substantial change in the existing state of affairs. In line with this reasoning every change cannot and need not be termed a revolution. Revolution had a two-fold dimension, namely, negative and positive aspects. The negative role involved the destruction, partially or fully, of the existing structure while the positive goal involved the reconstruction of a new structure of society. In a revolutionary process the old structure was substantially altered and new things emerged out giving new direction and momentum to the society. In terms of the mechanics of the revolution we visualise two groups or forces. One group which may be called as a revolutionary group wanted to bring about fundamental changes in the existing order of society, while the other group was keen to defend the status quo. These two groups may be classified as revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries. A revolution, therefore, involved changes in the subjective and objective conditions in the society. If a revolution succeeded it would bring into operation new values and new systems. In our view
JP's revolutionary process in terms of his political ideas was in the form of creation of new values and new structures.

a) **Change in Value Systems**

Old Values - Conflict between old values and new values - new values are established.

b) **Change in Structure**

Old Structure - Conflict between old structure and new structure - old structure was destroyed and new structure was established.

In respect of the state and revolution we conceptualise JP's ideas at three levels:

1. The revolutionary process would be directed by the State,

2. The revolution would be directed against the State by the people,

3. The revolution would be jointly launched by the people and the State to usher in a better organisation and a better system.

Here again we believe that JP in his early Marxian phase pinned his hopes on the first method of revolution.
In his later Gandhian phase he developed immense faith in the capacity of the people to launch a revolution through their own efforts. It is interesting to note that JP did not have much belief in the third method of the people and the State working together to bring about revolutionary changes. Obviously, JP believed that the State was an instrument of force or coercion sacrificing the individual in its all pervasive power. He took a typical anarchist position on this issue.

There was yet another way of conceptualising the situation in terms of certain important aspects. In the first place, there could be a political revolution involving fundamental changes in the political structure of institutions in the society leading to a social revolution. In this instance a change in the political system led to a change in the social system. In the second place, a comprehensive social revolution could lead to a political revolution. In this sense a social revolution led to a political revolution. In the third place, there could be simultaneous fundamental changes in the social, political, economic and cultural set up of the society. Such a comprehensive revolution would primarily be the result of a subjective psychological change in the individuals living in the State. This would be a total revolution involving basic changes in societal dominant values in individuals. It is our contention that JP advocated
such an all embracing revolution in his humanistic concepts of *Sarvodaya* and Total Revolution.

In respect of democracy JP gave a new formulation to it by developing the concept of Partyless Democracy. Western democracy was supposed to be a technique and a method for the organisation and operation of the State system. In theory democracy was supposed to attach the highest value to the development of individual personality. Each individual and his opinions were expected to be respected, though different viewpoints were bound to arise frequently. Such a process ultimately led to a consensus. But in practice the democratic principle did not always lead to a consensus. As a practical alternative majority rule or opinion was expected to provide the answer. Once this notion of majority rule was accepted as an important principle of organising and operating a democratic government the emergence of a party system was a logical corollary. In this context, Western political thinkers have developed the two party and multi-party systems as part and parcel of the liberal democratic model. JP questioned the entire structure and operation of the classical liberal democratic model. He severely criticised the Western democratic model on the ground that the principle of majority rule and the party system were mere travesty of truth. The principle
of majority rule was distorted in such a manner that it never reflected the wishes of the people, while the party system was an archaic institution dominated and manipulated by party bosses to suit their ulterior ends. According to JP corruption and nepotism became the order of the day in democratic systems. JP developed an alternative model in the form of partyless democracy through village self-government or panchayat rule. Here also in this context we see JP's basic concern to assign primacy to the individual vis-a-vis the State and the society. We are not implying that JP was interested in the primacy of the individual per se but he was keen to ensure the primacy of the individual as a part of the collective social system. Hence, like all his other concepts the notion of partyless democracy also proceeded on the assumption that the individual must have an appropriate place within the State or society. JP in his later years coming under Gandhi's influence became an individualist par excellence.

(ii)

Methodology of the Study

In this portion of the thesis we shall specify the methodology of the study. In the normal sense methodology denoted the methods and techniques used in the study undertaken by the researcher. But it must be borne in
mind that it was something more than a mere exposition of methods and techniques. We believe that it implied the clear exposition of the theoretical assumptions and the conceptual framework visualised in the study which have been already indicated in the first part of this chapter. In this second part we shall deal with the methods and techniques employed in the study. The primary method followed in this thesis is documentary and to a certain extent philosophical. We are arguing that it is documentary for the simple reason that our primary source material depended upon the writings of JP.

The first task before a serious student of JP was to go through the plethora of material available at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. The uniqueness of JP's writings was not only in respect of its massive quantity but on closer examination we have found a complex combination of theoretical exposition on the one hand and the innate desire on his part to put those ideas into concrete reality. JP's political ideas are to be found in his voluminous writings. But his action through participation in protest movements and welfare programmes were embedded in his writings. Here JP's concern was not only to provide a rational and philosophical justification
for his political concepts or ideas but a pervasive desire to satisfy his intellectual curiosity as a prelude to concrete action. There can be no doubt that JP's public life or his life situations were mainly responsible for shaping his theory. In consonance with this fact we have used the techniques of historical and developmental biography, but we hasten to add that these approaches are neither completely historical nor completely normative but a combination of the two. Rather it is a functional approach tailored to suit the objectives of the study. It has to be borne in mind that JP was not a professional theorist or a political philosopher interested in constructing a systematic and scientific theory. In fact, JP was essentially a man of action to whom political ideas or theories served the purpose of providing justification for his actions.

This study is primarily based on a close examination of primary and secondary sources which constitute its source material. It may be stated that the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library has a vast amount of original source material in the form of JP papers, notes, memoranda, letters, desk notes, pamphlets, books by JP and books on JP. The primary documents related to the direct writings of JP available in the JP papers. Of course, we had the invidious task of selecting material from the totality of his writings by
focussing on material that was central to the basic purpose of the study. In yet another sense, a different type of problem arose while collecting the material on JP because of the persistent inconsistency between his thought and action. In spite of these formidable problems we have been able to evolve a particular framework from JP's writings.

The second important primary source was the face to face interview through participant observation with a few close associates of JP. This was done with a view to provide substance and strength as well as validity to our analysis of JP's political ideas. In such face to face interviews certain clarifications were sought which was of considerable help in the proper analysis of JP's political concepts.

It may also be proper to point out that the original source material collected from the JP papers was subjected to internal and external criticism. By internal criticism we refer to the authenticity of the documents and the material. The authenticity of the documents was checked and cross-checked by relating it to other material on JP and his ideas. In respect of the external criticism we refer to the critical interpretation and evaluation of the material in the study. We have used our analytical skill to analyse in an objective manner the vast body of literature on JP.
The secondary source material that we have referred to in the thesis consist of the writings of political scientists, economists, social scientists, editors of journals, etc. who have made significant contributions on JP. It may be mentioned here that there are very few serious works on JP based on primary source material culled out from JP papers. This was a handicap as well as an advantage to us. It was a handicap in the sense that there did not seem to be any existing framework of analysis on which we could draw upon, but it was also an advantage because it could provide some opportunity for some good work.

Another related difficulty in understanding JP's political ideas was that it was not always consistent, since it varied over time and space. Probably this type of difficulty arose because sometimes in his eagerness for action JP acted first and then rationalised or theorised his ideas in the form of concepts. As a result of this inconsistency a theoretical understanding or analysis of his writings has become an onerous task for the researcher. This only implied that there was need to understand the concrete objective conditions in which he produced his writings. We are not suggesting in any manner that JP has to be evaluated primarily in terms of his activities.
to understand the practical problems with which he was confronted before and after independence in India. There can be no doubt there was some theoretical basis or presupposition behind every action planned and operated by JP. Therefore, an evaluation of JP or constructive criticism of his political ideas will have to be made on these theoretical assumptions or presuppositions. We have kept such considerations before us in the subsequent interpretation of JP's political ideas in the study.

In the study we shall also discuss JP's political ideas by categorising them broadly into two phases in his life, namely, the Marxian phase and the Gandhian phase in his life. This has been done with a view to provide a proper frame of analysis and to meet the tests of academic objectivity. When we engage ourselves in such an intellectual exercise it did not mean that JP was not a original thinker. On the contrary, it is our conviction that in some of his political ideas JP provided a deep insight into problems and issues. He was endowed with a clear mind that analysed problems with a great deal of clarity and creative objectivity. Thus, our categorisation, it is hoped, would serve a legitimate academic purpose in our study. In conformity with our framework the thesis has examined JP's political concepts like Marxian Socialism, Sarvodaya, Total Revolution
Communitarian Polity and Partyless Democracy. Wherever necessary some attention is devoted to a comparative study of JP and Gandhi because JP was a Gandhite who derived deep inspiration from the writings of Gandhi. The concluding chapter summarises the findings of the study.

(iii)

Hypotheses of the Study

In this part we shall specify the series of hypotheses which have governed the analysis of the problem. These hypotheses have been tested in the course of our subsequent discussion. We hope that a systematic and objective study of JP's political ideas was possible through the development of a number of hypotheses. Such an objective will provide a proper theoretical focus to the discussion since the analysis of any subject always presupposed certain assumptions and theoretical propositions. Our thesis has also proceeded with certain assumptions and theoretical propositions which are closely related to our analysis and understanding of the problem.

1. Indigenous political concepts or ideas formulated on the basis of socio-economic and political realities prevailing internally in an underdeveloped country have
better chances of success than political ideas or concepts borrowed from the West and imposed from above.

2. Political ideas or concepts can be successfully transformed into action only if the objective conditions in the society were favourable for such a purpose.

3. For the successful implementation of political ideas or concepts charismatic leadership was a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition in itself for the purpose.

4. When an individual formulated a number of political ideas or concepts without a systematic and integrated political theory or philosophy he found it difficult to put his ideas into action.

The above hypotheses have determined the parameters of our discussion in the thesis. It is hoped that the subsequent discussion will either confirm or reject the various hypotheses projected by us at the beginning of the study.